

Testimony Regarding

H.B. 6590: An Act Concerning Certain Protections for Group and Family Child Care Homes and H.B. 6593: An Act Concerning Housing Authority Jurisdiction

Joint Committee on Housing
February 7, 2023

Dear Senator Moore, Representative Luxenberg, Senator Lesser, Representative Khan, Senator Sampson, Representative Scott, and esteemed members of the Housing Committee;

My name is Eli Sabin, and I am testifying today on behalf of Connecticut Voices for Children, a research-based child advocacy organization working to ensure that one day Connecticut is a thriving and equitable state where all children achieve their full potential.

Connecticut Voices for Children is testifying in support of

H.B. 6590: An Act Concerning Certain Protections for Group and Family Child Care Homes

Connecticut Voices for Children supports H.B. 6590 because it will increase the number of licensed child care providers to help meet the needs of Connecticut's working families—particularly those with infants and toddlers—by expanding protections for licensed group child care and family child care homes.

For Connecticut's economy to fully recover from the pandemic, parents in Connecticut need access to affordable, reliable, and high-quality child care. Even before the pandemic, though, Connecticut's early child care infrastructure was inadequate and unable to meet the needs of Connecticut parents. A 2018 report by the Center for American Progress found that 44 percent of Connecticut's population lives in a "child care desert," defined as a census tract with "little or no access to quality child care."

Increasing the availability of home-based child care is an important step we can take to address the lack of affordable child care options across our state. Home-based child care can help alleviate our access and affordability crisis and contribute to Connecticut's equitable economic recovery. By allowing the child care industry to meet the needs of parents, we will be giving our labor force and economy a boost while also investing in future generations.

Research by Connecticut Voices for Children has found that Connecticut's early care industry has been shrinking and losing its capacity to serve young children and their families. In 2003, Connecticut had 89,576 licensed and accredited early care slots for children age zero through five. Early in 2020, CT had 2,055 fewer licensed and accredited early care slots than in 2003. With this loss of slots, the state's infant and toddler slot shortage is now up to 50,000, creating

even bigger strains on parents. This shortage is caused, in part, by a steep decline in the number of licensed family child care providers (FCCs). In 2002, there were 3,431 FCCs across the state, and in 2019 there were only 1,890 FCCs.¹

Increasing the number of child care slots is important because family and group child care are essential to building a safe, quality care and education system and growing our economy:

1. High-quality early care options provide essential educational foundations for children.
2. FCCs provide affordable child care options. Working families and families of color, who face the greatest barriers to accessing jobs and care, are more likely to utilize FCCs due to their lower costs, flexible hours, and proximity to homes.
3. Expanding opportunities for FCCs to operate promotes entrepreneurship, especially among women and women of color, and will help create new jobs and local businesses.
4. The early child care industry allows parents to work and grow in their careers.

The academic and learning benefits of quality early child care are well documented. Family and group child care programs are uniquely well-positioned to meet the needs of infants and toddlers, providing safe, nurturing individualized care in a small group setting and providing access to the developmentally appropriate early learning opportunities critical to their healthy growth and development. The benefits of preparing children to learn in school are particularly robust for children from disenfranchised communities.²

In addition to the economic benefits of creating jobs and allowing parents to work, high-quality early child care creates long-term economic benefits for future generations. A significant body of research shows that not being able to access child care explains why many parents are not able to work. In 2016, 27 percent of Connecticut families with children under the age of five had one or more parents outside the labor force. This included 16 percent of single-parent households and 33 percent of two-parent households.³ The pandemic has increased the challenges parents, especially mothers, face in balancing child care and work, making our state's support of early child care even more important.

Despite all the benefits that family and group child care programs provide, many current and prospective providers face barriers that make it difficult to start, maintain, or expand their home-based child care businesses. In particular, local zoning laws prevent home-based providers from opening businesses, making a living, and providing crucial care to local families.

Residents in every town in our state need better access to child care. That's why Connecticut Voices for Children supports **H.B. 6590: An Act Concerning Certain Protections for Group and Family Child Care Homes**. By strengthening protections for home-based child care, we'll

¹ Lee, J. & Ruth, L. (2020). *The state of early childhood: Can Connecticut's struggling family child care providers fill a 50,000 infant and toddler gap amidst the coronavirus recession?* Retrieved from Connecticut Voices for Children: https://ctvoices.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/CRR-SOEC_FCCs_Just-Research.pdf

² Karoly, L. A., & Bigelow, J. H. (2005). *The economics of investing in universal preschool education in California*. Retrieved from The RAND Corporation: https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2005/RAND_MG349.pdf

³ Connecticut Voices for Children Analysis of 2016 American Community Survey Public Use Microdata on Family Type and Employment Status (FES).

be providing a safe, nurturing environment for thousands of young children. H.B. 6590 will help our kids grow and learn, lower costs for families, and support our economic recovery.

JUST FACTS

- Family and group child care can increase children’s educational achievement. Studies show that children who attended preschool experienced higher reading achievement throughout their education, reduced need for special education services, lower likelihood of justice system involvement, higher high school graduation rates, higher earnings at age 27, and reduced use of social services by age 27.
- Making it easier for home-based care providers to operate will have positive economic outcomes for parents, businesses, and taxpayers across the state of Connecticut. One reason for this is that “states with a greater share of women in the labor force consistently have a higher share of children in paid care.”⁴
- Connecticut can emulate stronger statutory protections for home-based child care; states across the country, such as New York and California have enacted protections for larger group child care homes that make it easier for them to provide care for.
- A study conducted by the University of Connecticut’s Center for Economic Analysis found that every family child care provider licensed with the support of All Our Kin allowed 4-5 parents to enter the workforce.
- The UConn study found that between 2006 and 2009, family child care providers licensed through All Our Kin created about \$18.4 million in additional tax revenue and generated \$15.2 million in macroeconomic benefits to the New Haven region alone.

H.B. 6593: An Act Concerning Housing Authority Jurisdiction

Connecticut Voices for Children supports HB 6593 because enabling public housing authorities to build affordable housing and administer housing vouchers in areas with more resources⁵ will expand housing choice and opportunity for low-income families and children.

⁴ Region Track (2020). *Child Care in State Economies: 2019 Update*. Retrieved from Committee for Economic Development of The Conference Board:

<https://www.ced.org/assets/reports/childcareimpact/181104%20CCSE%20Report%20Jan30.pdf>

⁵ It is true that the terms “low opportunity” area and “high opportunity” area have been widely used and accepted within the housing lexicon. Unfortunately, these terms misrepresent what these communities are and how they became that way. The more accurate reflection of a so-called high opportunity area is that it is wealthier by design and, as a result, higher resourced. The more accurate reflection of a so-called low opportunity area is that it is poorer by design and, as a result, not only lower resourced but has also been historically denied resources.

Connecticut is facing an affordable housing crisis. In 2018, Connecticut had the ninth highest housing costs and more than 48 percent of Connecticut renters spent more than 30 percent of their income on housing,⁶ a threshold commonly used to evaluate affordability.

Public housing authorities in Connecticut play a key role in providing affordable housing to those who need it. Currently, they provide housing for 150,000 families and individuals in over 62,000 housing units.⁷ But they are limited in their scope. Connecticut law dictates that each housing authority's jurisdiction is limited to the municipal boundaries of the town which they operate in.⁸ This practice reinforces segregation and concentrates affordable housing resources in our state's cities. While this policy works for some families, many others want to move but can't because affordable housing is not available outside of our urban centers.

Connecticut's public housing authorities have become major operators and developers of quality, mixed-income housing. Thus, the state's artificial limitations on where PHAs can develop creates barriers to managing and developing quality affordable housing to meet our state's needs.

Public housing authorities also administer most housing choice vouchers. The jurisdictional limits on public housing authorities make it difficult for them to meet their obligation under federal and state law to affirmatively further fair housing. Under current jurisdictional practices, 86 percent of voucher holders live outside of so-called higher opportunity areas, and 48 percent are concentrated in the 2 percent of the land area assessed as very low opportunity.⁹ People of color, people with disabilities, and female-headed households with children are disproportionately represented in housing voucher recipients. Nearly 80 percent of voucher holders are Black or Latino. 38% of voucher holders have a disability. 43% of voucher holders are female-headed households with children.¹⁰

The concentration of low-income people and people of color in communities that have been historically denied resources impacts opportunity, particularly in education. Typically, Connecticut's students attend school in the neighborhood they live in,¹¹ leading to high rates of school segregation for Black and Latino students.¹² The experience of attending such a school directly impacts academic achievement. In racially segregated, high-poverty schools, there are

⁶ Connecticut Voices for Children. (2020, July). Issue Briefing Book [PDF file]. Retrieved from <https://ctvoices.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Issue-Briefing-Book-2020-Final.pdf>

⁷ Connecticut National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials. (n.d.). Retrieved from www.conn-nahro.org/index.htm

⁸ Open Communities Alliance. (2018, November). A Case for Broadening Housing Authority Jurisdiction in Connecticut [PDF file].

⁹ Boggs, E. & Dabrowski, L. (2017, September). Out of Balance: Subsidized Housing, Segregation, and Opportunity in Connecticut [PDF file]. Retrieved from https://www.ctoca.org/outofbalance_summary

¹⁰ Boggs, E. & Dabrowski, L. (2017, September). Out of Balance: Subsidized Housing, Segregation, and Opportunity in Connecticut [PDF file].

¹¹ Rabe Thomas, J. & Kara, J. (2017, September 28). The state of CT's public schools in charts. Retrieved from <https://ctmirror.org/2017/09/28/the-state-of-cts-public-schools-in-charts/>

¹² Frankenberg, E., Ee, J., Ayscue, J. B., & Orfield, G. (2019, May 10). Harming our Common Future: America's Segregated Schools 65 Years after Brown [PDF file]. Retrieved from <https://www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/k-12-education/integration-and-diversity/harming-our-common-future-americas-segregated-schools-65-years-after-brown/Brown-65-050919v4-final.pdf>

fewer resources, higher rates of teacher turnover, and teachers with fewer years of experience.¹³ Many of these schools have higher rates of school discipline, pushing Black and Latino students out of the classroom.¹⁴ Further, students attending high-poverty, racially segregated schools face increased exposure to trauma and hardship.¹⁵ The combination of these experiences depresses student performance. In contrast, moving to a neighborhood with lower-poverty rates can yield long-term gains in economic and educational well-being. Children who move to a new, lower-poverty neighborhood before the age of 13 are more likely to attend college and have higher earnings in adulthood.¹⁶ While many families in urban neighborhoods don't necessarily want to move, others might see affordable housing options in higher-resourced areas—if they existed—as an opportunity to provide their child with more educational resources and a safer environment.

Expanding the jurisdiction of PHAs provides economic benefits in addition to advancing racially and economically diverse communities and affordable housing options in the state. The construction of 100 affordable housing units is also estimated to create 120 jobs.¹⁷ What is more, the creation of new, market-rate housing is proven to aid in driving down spiking housing costs across municipalities, and this is particularly important for renters at or just below the AMI.¹⁸

In conclusion, providing public housing authorities expanded jurisdiction is a big piece of the affordable housing puzzle. Enabling public housing authorities to operate beyond their jurisdiction would allow for greater housing choice, increased affordable housing, decreased segregation, and enhanced opportunities for low-income children and families.

Just Facts:

- In 2018, Connecticut had the ninth highest housing costs.¹⁹
- More than 48 percent of Connecticut renters spent more than 30 percent of their income on housing.²⁰
- PHAs in Connecticut provide housing for 150,000 families and individuals in over 62,000 housing units.²¹

¹³ Bhargava, A. (2018). The Interdependence of Housing and School Segregation [PDF file]. Retrieved from https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/A_Shared_Future_Chapter_24_Interdependence_of_Housing_and_School_Segregation.pdf

¹⁴ Rothstein, R. (2014, Nov. 12). The Racial Achievement Gap, Segregated Schools, and Segregated Neighborhoods: A Constitutional Insult. Economic Policy Institute. Retrieved from <https://www.epi.org/publication/the-racial-achievement-gap-segregated-schools-and-segregated-neighborhoods-a-constitutionalinsult/>

¹⁵ Hair, N. L., Hanson, J. L., Wolfe, B. L., & Pollak, S. D. (2015). Association of Child Poverty, Brain Development, and Academic Achievement. *Journal of the American Medical Association Pediatrics*, 169(9), 822- 900. doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2015.1475; Lacour, M. & Tissington, L. D. (2011). The effects of poverty on academic achievement [PDF file]. *Educational Research and Reviews*, 6(7), 522-527. Retrieved from https://academicjournals.org/article/article1379765941_Lacour%20and%20Tissington.pdf

¹⁶ Galvez, M., Simington, J., & Treskon, M. (2017, February). Moving to Work and Neighborhood Opportunity: A Scan of Mobility Initiatives by Moving to Work Public Housing Authorities [PDF file]. Retrieved from https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/88171/galvez_2017.01.04_moving_to_work_and_neighborhood_opportunity_formattedv2_final_2.pdf

¹⁷ Connecticut Voices for Children. (2020, July). Issue Briefing Book [PDF file].

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Connecticut National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials. (n.d.).

- Nearly 80 percent of voucher holders are Black or Latino. 38% of voucher holders have a disability. 43% of voucher holders are female-headed households with children.²² Of these voucher holders, 86% live in low and very-low opportunity areas.²³
- In racially segregated, high-poverty schools, there are fewer resources, more teacher turnover, and less experienced teachers.²⁴
- Many racially segregated, high-poverty schools have higher rates of school discipline, pushing Black and Latinx students out of the classroom.²⁵
- Children who move to a new, lower-poverty neighborhood before the age of 13 are more likely to attend college and have higher earnings in adulthood.²⁶
- The construction of 100 affordable housing units creates 120 jobs.²⁷

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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²² Boggs, E. & Dabrowski, L. (2017, September). Out of Balance: Subsidized Housing, Segregation, and Opportunity in Connecticut [PDF file].

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Bhargava, A. (2018). The Interdependence of Housing and School Segregation [PDF file].

²⁵ Rothstein, R. (2014, Nov. 12). The Racial Achievement Gap, Segregated Schools, and Segregated Neighborhoods: A Constitutional Insult. Economic Policy Institute.

²⁶ Galvez, M., Simington, J., & Treskon, M. (2017, February). Moving to Work and Neighborhood Opportunity: A Scan of Mobility Initiatives by Moving to Work Public Housing Authorities [PDF file].

²⁷ Connecticut Voices for Children. (2020, July). Issue Briefing Book [PDF file].